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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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Housekeepers' Chat

Monday, June 8, 1931.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "A Meal for a Man." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

Bulletin available: "Cooking Beef According to the Cut."

--ooOoo--

The hero of your tale today is Bill, the husband of the bride across the street.

Last Sunday, while Uncle Ebenezer was off on a fishing trip, I was invited to take Sunday breakfast with the young couple across the street. Hardly was my first waffle underway when the bride said, "If you don't mind discussing menus on Sunday, Aunt Sammy, Bill has a few things he would like to talk over with you."

"Go ahead," I said. "There's nothing like getting a man's point of view on the meal problem."

"I've been wanting to tell you all these ideas of mine for a long time. May I begin at the beginning? You see I've spent a lot of my life in a mining camp--was practically born and brought up in one. And my ideas about food naturally were made in my environment. No one ever came up to the mines to preach us the gospel of minerals and vitamins or milk and green vegetables. We ate so-called "he-man food" three hundred and sixty five days of the year--- huge flapjacks, you know, with syrup and fried eggs and bacon for breakfast. And, for other meals, beans, meat, potatoes, and gravy. Pie or pudding for dessert.

"Of course," said Bill, "since I've been married I've learned a thing or two about food. Especially about vegetables." Here he exchanged a smile with his wife and she passed one on to me. "I've been converted to vegetables. I know that they really are worth eating and that they are good, too, if properly prepared. And I no longer insist on griddle cakes and fried eggs for breakfast every morning. In fact, I've reached the place where I have to have my morning fruit or breakfast isn't breakfast.

"But I'll tell you, Aunt Sammy, I'm still not sold to meals made up of nothing but a dab of salad, a dainty sandwich and a bit of fancy fruit for dessert. That is," he added hastily, seeing a hurt look appear on his wife's face, "that is, I would like once in a while, just for a change, you know, to come home someday to a he-man dinner again, just for old time's sake.

"Tomorrow is my birthday and I thought that perhaps you would broadcast for the occasion a masculine dinner. One that contains meat with lots of gravy and good old mashed potato to put it on. And onions. For dessert I think I'd like, instead of pie or cake, an old-fashioned pudding of some kind. Maybe a steamed one like those my mother used to fix for special occasions. Couldn't this be a compromise meal between the old and the new, Aunt Sammy? One that contains the old stand-bys in food with the minerals and vitamins included too?"

I promised Bill that the first thing this morning, rain or shine, I would broadcast a menu according to his specifications, a menu either for miners or millionaires. An old-fashioned meal, balanced according to modern knowledge of food needs with enough to eat for Bill & Mrs. Bill and the four friends who are invited to help celebrate his birthday.

Here is Bill's dinner. Try it on your husband tonight and see how he likes it. Swiss Steak and Onions; Mashed Potatoes; Buttered Green Beans; Radishes; Shredded Lettuce; and, for dessert, Steamed Apricot Pudding.

I believe I'd better repeat that menu. First, Swiss Steak with Onions. Plenty of rich, brown gravy with it to go on Bill's potatoes. Next--here come the minerals, vitamins, crispness and fresh flavor--Buttered Green Beans; Radishes; Shredded Lettuce. This last to be served with French dressing. Then the dessert, which is Steamed Apricot Pudding. And we have a recipe for that.

Perhaps we'd better concentrate now on the very first and the very last of that meal--the steak and the pudding.

Swiss steak is not an expensive meat dish because it is made from one of the less expensive cuts of beef. You can make it of steak, about two and a half inches thick, cut from the round, rump, or chuck. It is made tender by long, slow cooking in the presence of moisture. You remember the old rule: "Make the less tender meat tender by heat, moisture and slow cooking." I needn't go into further details on this subject since they are all given on page five of the beef leaflet. And I know that by this time you all own one of these leaflets.

What's that? Well, did you ever? Here is an American housekeeper who was left out somehow and actually does not own a beef leaflet. Please send us your address right away and we'll put a copy of "Cooking Beef According to the Cut" in one of Uncle Sam's brown envelope's and mail it to you pronto, as Bill would say.

There are seven ingredients in Swiss steak:

3 pounds of lean beef about 2 and 1/2 inches thick
3 tablespoons of melted suet
1/2 cup of flour
1 and 1/2 teaspoons of salt
1/8 teaspoon of pepper
2 and 1/2 cups of hot water
and, onions sliced.
I'll list those seven once more. (Repeat.)

Sift the flour, salt and pepper together and beat these thoroughly into the steak with a meat pounder. The beating makes the meat more tender, and the flour absorbs the juice. You can cut the steak into individual portions, if you prefer to.

Sear the meat in the hot fat in a heavy skillet or kettle, browning the sliced onions at the same time. Now cover with the water and and put a lid over the skillet. Simmer, adding more water if necessary, for two hours, or until the meat is so tender that it can be cut with a fork. Occasionally during the cooking turn the pieces. If the gravy becomes too thick, add more liquid from time to time. There should be plenty of rich gravy to serve over the meat. And serve it all piping hot.

So much for the first of the meal. Now for the apricot pudding. Eight ingredients in this pudding:

1/2 pound of dried apricots
1 and 1/2 cups of sifted, soft-wheat flour
1/4 cup of butter or other fat
1/2 cup of sugar
2 eggs
2 teaspoons of baking powder
1/4 teaspoon of salt, and
1/2 cup of milk
Once again, (Repeat.)

Wash the apricots and chop them fine. Mix them with 2 tablespoons of the flour. Sift the remaining flour with the baking powder and salt. Cream the fat. Add the sugar and the well-beaten eggs. Add alternately with the milk to the sifted dry ingredients. Stir in the apricots. Pour the mixture into a greased mold. Cover and steam for two hours. Serve hot with hard sauce.

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Tomorrow we'll talk about window boxes.